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Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the joint statement of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, and the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on strengthening friendship and neighbourliness (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 21.

(*Signed*) Mahmadamin **Mahmadaminov**

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Annex to the letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Joint statement by the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, and the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, on strengthening friendship and good-neighbourliness

At the invitation of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, conducted a State visit to the Republic of Tajikistan on 9 and 10 March 2018.

During fruitful talks held in an open, friendly and constructive atmosphere, the Heads of State discussed in detail key issues relating to the current state of relations between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan, the prospect of further broadening and deepening bilateral multidimensional cooperation in the political, commercial and economic, transport and communication, cultural and humanitarian and other spheres, as well as current regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The Heads of State welcomed the high level of inter-State dialogue that had been achieved in recent years and the positive trend in the development of cooperation between the two countries, and

Guided by the age-old historical and cultural unity of the peoples of the two countries, grounded in the inviolable principles of friendship, good-neighbourliness and mutual respect,

Expressing their conviction that constructive and mutually beneficial cooperation between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan is in the long-term interests of the peoples of the two countries and is a key factor in ensuring peace, stability, security and sustainable development throughout the vast region of Central Asia,

Reaffirming their commitment to the universally recognized principles and norms of international law, and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including the principles of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability of borders, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit,

Striving to further expand and deepen Tajik-Uzbek relations, and ensure the timely and full implementation of the agreements concluded,

Hereby *state* the following:

1. The Heads of State, deeply aware of their important responsibility for maintaining and strengthening peace and stability, development and the prosperity of the entire region, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on Eternal Friendship between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan of 15 June 2000, reaffirm their determination to further develop and strengthen the traditional relations of friendship, good-neighbourliness and cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Heads of State expressed their confidence that the agreement between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan concerning certain sections of the Tajik-Uzbek State border, which was signed during the visit, will contribute to achieving these goals.

The Heads of State stressed the importance of transforming the State border between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan into a border of friendship, good-neighbourliness and cooperation, which is in the vital interests of the two fraternal peoples.

2. The parties, noting the importance of constructive political dialogue for the gradual expansion of relations between the two States, supported the further expansion of contacts at the highest levels, and at other levels. The Presidents, to further develop the legal framework for long-term cooperation and capitalize on the vast potential for cooperation in all areas, agreed to develop a treaty on strategic partnership between the two States in the near future.

3. The President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, expressed his support for the large-scale reforms being carried out by the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, aimed at strengthening the capacity of the country, developing the national economy, improving people's well-being and enhancing the country's international standing.

The leadership of the Republic of Tajikistan expressed its support for the initiatives taken by the Republic of Uzbekistan to intensify regional cooperation, in particular by organizing regular consultative meetings of the Heads of State of Central Asia.

4. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, expressed his support for the efforts of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, to support the socioeconomic development of Tajikistan and strengthen regional security.

The Uzbek leadership expressed its support for the initiative of Tajikistan with regard to the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028.

5. The Presidents emphasized the strategic nature of the further expansion of mutually beneficial trade and economic cooperation between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The parties noted with appreciation the current positive development of bilateral trade and highlighted the significant potential for trade diversification, as well as the potential to increase the volume of trade to $500 million in the coming years.

In this regard, the parties reaffirmed the importance of continuing to expand the range of goods traded. They noted the great potential for the development of industrial cooperation, joint ventures and trading companies; the active development of foreign trade infrastructure and support mechanisms for export and import operations; as well as the establishment of joint business forums and national trade shows.

The parties will make joint efforts to attract and encourage investment in the economies of both countries. In this context, the Heads of State welcome the signing of an agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the promotion and reciprocal protection of investments.

The parties noted the success of the jointly organized national exhibitions and business forums held in Dushanbe and Tashkent in 2017, which contributed to the expansion of contacts between the business circles of the two countries and the signing of a robust package of trade agreements and contracts.

An exhibition entitled "Made in Uzbekistan" and the joint Tajik-Uzbek business forum, both of which took place during the high-level visit, were highly appreciated.

The two Heads of State commended the outcome of the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation, held on 10 January 2018 in Dushanbe, and emphasized the need to further strengthen the role of the Commission as an effective mechanism to address a whole range of issues related to the development of trade and economic cooperation, and cultural and humanitarian cooperation, and to identify promising new areas of interaction.

The parties noted the need to expand and deepen contacts between the regions of two States in the trade and economic, scientific and technical, and cultural and humanitarian spheres, in accordance with the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan on interregional cooperation, which was signed during the visit.

6. The Heads of State, highlighting the importance of fully capitalizing on their collective transportation and communication capacities and the two countries' transit potential, instructed the relevant authorities to intensify cooperation in the field of transport, and to work to renovate existing and develop new road, rail and air routes.

The Presidents highlighted, with great satisfaction, the inauguration in April 2017 of direct flights between Tashkent and Dushanbe.

The parties noted that the revival of old and the opening of new road, rail and air routes between the towns of the two countries will contribute to the revitalization of cultural and humanitarian, and also trade and economic, relations between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

It was noted that further cooperation on establishing competitive tariffs for foreign trade cargo with the participation of the railways of the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan will facilitate efficient use of the existing transport corridors.

In this context, the two Heads of State welcome the reopening of the rail connection along the Galaba-Amuzang line.

7. The leaders of both States stressed the priority attached to cooperation in the cultural and humanitarian field and the development of direct contacts and the sharing of experiences among academic institutions, educational institutions, the media, arts and sports teams, youth and women's organizations, trade unions and other civil society institutions.

The Heads of State commended the successful holding in 2017 of the Uzbekistan Days of Culture in the Republic of Tajikistan and the Tajikistan Days of Culture in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

The Heads of State noted the importance of expanding relations in the fields of education and science, including by promoting cooperation between higher education institutions and the academies of sciences of the two countries.

The Parties will cooperate and create favourable conditions for the training of scientific and teaching staff, the exchange of researchers, experts, academic staff and students and the exchange of information on the mutual recognition of diplomas, qualifications and academic degrees.

8. The Parties will continue to create an environment that is supportive to the activities of ethnic cultural centres in the territory of the two States in order to maintain and develop their native languages, cultures, traditions and customs, and to take measures to safeguard the rights and interests of citizens of one State who reside in the territory of the other State.

The Presidents of the two countries will focus on improving the learning and teaching of the Tajik language in Uzbekistan and the Uzbek language in Tajikistan,

by expanding the network of general education institutions that use the Tajik and Uzbek languages for instruction, cooperating on the sharing of educational and artistic literature, periodicals and scientific publications, and supporting the translation of classic works of literature and the works of modern writers of the two countries.

Tajikistan welcomed the establishment of a monument to two outstanding representatives of the two peoples, Abdurakhman Jami and Alisher Navoi, and the refurbishment of the museum of the founder of modern Tajik literature, Sadriddin Aini, in Samarkand.

Uzbekistan, for its part, welcomed the decision of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan to create a park named in honour of Navoi in Dushanbe and to install a monument there to Jami and Navoi.

9. The Parties, welcoming the resumed operation of checkpoints at the Tajik-Uzbek State border, stressed that their full-fledged operation will serve the interests of both peoples and create conditions conducive to the further development of bilateral relations.

The Heads of State welcomed the introduction of a visa-free regime for reciprocal visits of up to 30 days by citizens of the two States, which will foster the strengthening of contacts between the peoples of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

10. The Presidents reaffirmed their willingness to strengthen cooperation in countering terrorism and extremism, drug trafficking, transnational organized crime, arms trafficking, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration and other challenges and threats to regional and international security, in both bilateral and international forums, and in preventing unlawful activities directed against the national security interests of the Parties in their territories.

In this respect, all the necessary measures will be taken to improve cooperation through consultations between the relevant entities of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

11. The two Heads of State reaffirmed their readiness to develop cooperation in the military and military technology fields and in military education on mutually beneficial terms.

12. The Presidents welcomed the establishment of a joint Tajik-Uzbek working group on the neutralization of sites with manmade obstacles in the border areas between the two countries and noted the need to complete this work in 2018 and 2019.

13. The Presidents noted the importance of deepening cooperation, enhancing practical interaction and carrying out specific activities in the field of disaster management.

14. The Parties confirmed the convergence or proximity of their positions on current issues of peace, stability, security and sustainable development in Central Asia.

The Heads of State emphasized that a whole range of intraregional problems in Central Asia can and should be resolved only by the States of the region, through an open and constructive dialogue based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit and respect for and consideration of each other's interests.

15. The Presidents stressed that one of the key factors of prosperity in Central Asia was the integrated use of water and energy resources, taking into account the interests of all States in the region. They noted the importance of open dialogue, the strengthening of mutual understanding and the development of constructive cooperation and the search for mutually acceptable, fair and rational solutions.

The Parties expressed their mutual interest in developing regional partnerships for the rational and equitable use of water resources and stressed the importance for Central Asia of existing hydropower facilities and those under construction, in order to address water and energy issues.

In this context, the Uzbek side expressed its readiness to give full consideration to participating in the construction of hydropower facilities in the Republic of Tajikistan, including the Roghun hydropower plant, taking into account the universally recognized international norms and standards for the construction of such facilities.

The Heads of State stressed the need to improve the legal framework for the integrated and effective use of transboundary water resources in Central Asia to facilitate a constructive dialogue, considering the interests of all States in the region.

The Parties welcome the holding of the Central Asian International Ecological Forum (Tashkent, 5–8 June 2018) and the High-level International Conference on the Implementation of the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development 2018–2028" (Dushanbe, 20–22 June 2018).

16. Both Presidents agreed that, in international affairs, any contradictions and differences of opinion can be resolved only by political means, through negotiations and other peaceful means, in strict compliance with the universally accepted norms of international law and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

The Parties noted that there is significant potential for continuing and strengthening bilateral cooperation at the international level and expressed their mutual desire for further cooperation of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan within the framework of the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and other international organizations.

Both Presidents agree that the United Nations remains the leading universal international organization for maintaining global security and is the main platform for resolving inter-State and international issues. The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening its central coordinating role in international relations.

The Parties welcome the convening of the high-level international conference on Afghanistan "The Peace Process, Security Cooperation and Regional Connectivity" (Tashkent, 26–27 March 2018) and the High-level International Conference on Combating Terrorism and Radicalism (Dushanbe, 3–4 May 2018).

Tajikistan supported the initiative of Uzbekistan to develop and promote the United Nations General Assembly resolutions on strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, security and socioeconomic development in the Central Asian region and on education and religious tolerance, and also the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Taking into account Tajikistan's presidency of the Commonwealth of Independent States in 2018, the two Parties expressed their mutual interest in making more effective use of the mechanisms of the Commonwealth in order to transform it into an effective platform for mutually beneficial cooperation.

Uzbekistan supported the initiative of Tajikistan to establish the counter-narcotics centre of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Dushanbe.

Appreciation was expressed to Tajikistan for supporting initiatives by the Uzbek authorities to hold regular meetings of the heads of railway authorities of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the adoption of a joint statement by the Heads of SCO member States to youth.

The Presidents expressed appreciation for the constructive engagement of the two countries in the framework of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Tajikistan supported the proposal by the Uzbek authorities to hold the second OIC Summit on Science and Technology in Uzbekistan in 2020.

17. The heads of State expressed their commitment to the timely and faithful implementation of the bilateral documents signed by the Parties, and spoke in favour of further improving and expanding the legal framework with a view to strengthening Tajik-Uzbek relations in areas of mutual interest.

The Parties expressed satisfaction with the results of the State visit of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, and they stressed that the talks held and the documents signed during the visit will give a new impetus to the further development of mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in various fields, and will make an important contribution to a comprehensive deepening of inter-State relations.

18. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, expressed appreciation to the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, and the entire Tajik people for their hospitality, and the cordial and friendly reception extended to the Uzbek delegation, and he invited the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, to make a return State visit to Uzbekistan. Specific dates for the visit will be agreed through the diplomatic channels.